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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 000436

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DEPARTMENT FOR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: OSCE SAYS THERE IS AGREEMENT TO INFORMAL JCC MARCH
20-23 IN ISTANBUL

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Tefft called on OSCE Ambassador Roy Reeve February 28 to discuss South Ossetia. On the Joint Control Commission (JCC), Ambassador said that the U.S. is pressing the Georgians to agree to the JCC. Reeve said that there were some positive signals that a JCC meeting would take place. (Note: In a March 2 telcon, Deputy Nikolaev confirmed that the sides had just agreed to an informal meeting of the JCC on March 20-23 in Istanbul. End note.) On Sanakoyev, Ambassador said that the U.S. believes that the longer we wait to meet him, the harder it will become. Reeve supported the idea of Ambassadors meeting Sanakoyev but stressed that he would have no formal contact. Reeve welcomed the Georgian agreement to allow police cooperation in South Ossetia and offered other ideas on what the Georgians could do to move forward on conflict resolution. On elections, Reeve said the OSCE group would meet soon to start planning for the 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. End summary.

JCC ON?

¶2. (C) Ambassador Tefft called on OSCE Ambassador Roy Reeve February 28 to discuss South Ossetia. Ambassador told Reeve that the U.S. is pressing the Georgians to agree to a meeting of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), even as they press for the use of new formats. Reeve thanked him for the intervention and said that there were some positive signals that a JCC meeting would take place. (Note: In a March 2 telcon, Deputy Nikolaev confirmed that the sides agreed to an informal JCC on March 20-23 in Istanbul, possibly followed by a formal JCC. End note.) Reeve said that both sides were to blame for the failure to agree on a date earlier and that the Georgian and South Ossetian Co-Chairs had been in discussions about a new date.

¶3. (C) Reeve argued for continued use of the JCC, which he said is needed for technical reasons, such as getting a checkpoint at Didi Gupta. He thought that the Georgians could use agreement to work in the JCC to achieve their objective of having more bilateral contacts with the South Ossetians. He pointed to the fact that there are other mechanisms that are not being used, such as the Authorized Delegations (AD), which the Georgians could advocate to re-start. When asked whether Russia would agree, Reeve assessed that an invitation to a re-start meetings of ADs, coupled with agreement to attend the JCC, would be something that the Russians could not reasonably refuse.

REEVE RULES OUT FORMAL CONTACT WITH SANAKOYEV

¶4. (C) Turning to the de facto leader Sanakoyev, Ambassador said that the U.S. believes that the international community should not confer more legitimacy on one de facto leader over another. He briefed on his approach to the British, French, German and EU Ambassadors, noting the need to think about how to manage the issue of meeting Sanakoyev, who is gaining traction in South Ossetia. He offered the idea of signaling to the MFA that they could hold a meeting where Sanakoyev is present. While acknowledging OSCE concerns, Ambassador said that the U.S. concern is that the longer we wait to meet with him, the harder it will become.

¶5. (C) Reeve agreed that Sanakoyev is a factor but thought that the Georgians need to back off from overt support and let Sanakoyev stand on his own. Reeve said that he could not meet with Sanakoyev on a political level (although he did not explain why) but acknowledged that some of the OSCE's Donors' Economic Rehabilitation Projects will take place in areas controlled by Sanakoyev and he did not rule out a chance meeting with someone from Sanakoyev's team at "the opening of some school or clinic." He stressed, however, that he would abstain from formal contact. He noted with interest that the Tedeyev brothers, who are linked to the St. Petersburg Tambor mafia and who had been instrumental in Kokoity's rise to the de facto presidency, had switched sides and now worked for Sanakoyev.

GEORGIANS AGREE TO POLICE COOPERATION

¶6. (C) Reeve turned to his highest priority in South Ossetia: reconstruction of the law enforcement agencies, which he believes is the key to the withdrawal of the Joint

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Peacekeeping Force (JPKF). If you can get the two forces together with international monitors, he said, then the question arises of why you need the JPKF. He welcomed MOIA Merabishvili's recent agreement to allow police cooperation between Georgian and South Ossetians, including allowing a needs assessment of the South Ossetian militia. He said that Merabishvili understood that there would need to be a police force in South Ossetia.

¶7. (C) When asked what more the Georgians could do, Reeve said that the Georgians could remove the military police from the Zone of Conflict. He said that with the Georgian battalion (almost at 500 people) and Georgian police, there is no role for military police. He claimed that they are an irritant to the situation. He also suggested that the Georgian Government issue and publicize a clear set of rules on what goods can be transported to the Zone of Conflict. The lack of clear guidelines, he said simply, fuels corruption. In a follow-up phone call with Poloff, OSCE offered to come up with a list of items that could be raised with the Georgian Government.

ELECTIONS GROUP TO MEET SOON

¶8. (C) Ambassador raised the issue of preparing for the 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Reeve said that the OSCE elections group was going to call a meeting soon and agreed to work on a list of agreed recommended steps the group could use with the Government.
TEFFT